

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO
25/00954/TELE

CASE OFFICER
Claire Ringwood

DATE
11th November 2025

Address: Bamford Fieldhouse Cricket Club, Hollin Lane, Rochdale, OL11 5PW

Proposal: Prior notification for a 30m high lattice tower supporting 6 antennas, 4 transmission dishes, a shared meter cabinet, a dedicated operator equipment cabinet, and associated ancillary development

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	N/A

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N/A	Contrary to national policy?	N/A
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N/A	Contrary to previous decision?	N/A
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N/A	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N/A

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	N

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to OnBase?	N/A
-----	--	-----

CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N/A
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N/A

RECOMMENDATION	Prior Approval Required and Granted
----------------	-------------------------------------

CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 14/11/2025

SITE

The application site is located within Bamford Fieldhouse Cricket Club to the north-eastern corner of the cricket playing fields where there is currently a vegetated area with trees. There are tennis courts to the east side of the site. To the north of the site is a public playing field and to the east are residential properties. The site along with land to the north, south and east were within the Green Belt however, this land has recently been identified in Places for Everyone (PfE), adopted March 2024, as suitable for residential development as part of an allocation for 450 dwellings under Policy JP Allocation 17: Bamford/Norden. There are existing electricity pylons that run to the west of the site which the agent states are up to 50m in height. The site is bound by trees and hedging. There are no heritage impacts or tree preservation orders affecting the application site.

The submitted Site Specific Supplementary Information states that a pre-application enquiry was made to the Local Planning Authority on 1st August 2025 however, the Local Planning Authority have no record of such a pre-application enquiry being received.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the installation of a 30m high lattice tower supporting 6 x antennas, 4 x transmission dishes, a shared meter cabinet, a dedicated operator equipment cabinet and associated ancillary development. A 2.4m high palisade fence is proposed around the tower and equipment along with a 2.4m x 3m wide access gate.

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

Drawing No: 100 Rev A – Site Location Maps
Drawing No: 200 Rev A – Existing Site Plan
Drawing No: 201 Rev C – Proposed Site Plan
Drawing No: 202 Rev C – Proposed Planting Scheme Plan
Drawing No: 300 Rev B – Existing Site Elevation
Drawing No: 301 Rev C – Proposed Site Elevation
Covering Letter
Site Specific Supplementary Information
ICNIRP Declaration
Developer Notices
Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Brooks Ecological, Date: 28/08/2025 Amended 02/09/2025, Ref: ER-8750-01.1
Compensation Strategy by Brooks Ecological, Ref: EN-8750-01, Date: 04/09/2025
Received 15th September 2025

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended).

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

JP Allocation 17: Bamford / Norden

JP-C1 - An Integrated Network

JP-C2 - Digital Connectivity

JP-P1 - Sustainable Places

JP-G7 - Trees and Woodland

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P1 Improving image

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

DM1 General Development requirements

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

98/D35973 - Construction Of 5 All Weather Tennis Courts With Floodlights And Changing Room Extension To Existing Pavilion With Car Park Extension. Approved 08/01/1999.

99/D36409 - Conservatory Extension To Front Of Existing Clubhouse. Approved 25/05/1999.

21/01531/SCO - Scoping opinion in respect of a proposed scheme including 500 dwellings and a sports hub. EIA required 25/07/2022.

SUMMARY CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways

No objection.

Environmental Health (Noise)

No comments at the time of writing.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)

No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification letters and two site notices were displayed in close proximity to the site. No representations have been received.

ANALYSIS

Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) states that development consisting of the installation, alteration or replacement of electronic communications apparatus (other than on a building) is not permitted by Class A(a) if –

- (a) in the case of the installation of electronic communications apparatus (other than a mast), the apparatus, excluding any antenna, would exceed a height of 15 metres above ground level;
- (b) in the case of the alteration or replacement of electronic communications apparatus (other than a mast) that is already installed, the apparatus, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced exceed the height of the existing apparatus or a height of 15 metres above ground level, whichever is the greater;
- (c) in the case of the installation of a mast, the mast, excluding any antenna, would exceed a height of—
 - (i) 30 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or
 - (ii) 25 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway; or
- (d) in the case of the alteration or replacement of a mast, the height of the mast, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced exceed the greater of the height of the existing mast or a height of—
 - (i) 30 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or
 - (ii) 25 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway; or
- (e) in the case of the alteration or replacement of a mast—
 - (i) the mast is on any land which is, or is within, a site of special scientific interest; and
 - (ii) the mast would, when altered or replaced, exceed the original width of the mast by more than one third.

Based on 1 (c) above, the installation of a mast up to 30m on unprotected land to support electronic communications apparatus with associated equipment would be development permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A. However, under paragraph A.3 of Part 16, the applicant is required to apply to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the Council will be required as to the siting and appearance of the development.

Procedural Point

The provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (GDPO 2015), under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A Paragraph A.3 (4) require the LPA to assess the proposed development solely on the basis of its siting and appearance, taking into account any representations received. The provisions of Schedule 2 above do not require regard to be had to the development plan, however regard has been made to those policies in the development plan and related guidance and the NPPF only in so far as they are material considerations relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

The main issues are:

- The effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation on the character and appearance of the area, and
- If any harm would occur, whether that is outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed taking into account any suitable alternatives.

Section 10 of the NPPF, sets out the Government's general policy position supporting high quality communications infrastructure. Paragraph 119 states that, *"Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections"*.

Furthermore, paragraph 120 states, *"The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate."*

Paragraph 122 at point c) refers to evidence that justifies development proposals. For a new mast, evidence that existing buildings, masts and other structures have been considered alongside the ICNIRP certification on public exposure guidelines have been met.

Policy JP-C2 of PfE emphasises the ambition for Greater Manchester to become a digitally connected city region however, it explicitly sets out that this should not come at the expense of townscape quality. The NPPF is also a material consideration, and this includes a section on supporting high quality communications. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF is explicit in that development which is not well-designed should be refused.

Siting and Appearance

As set out above, when it comes to assessing applications for prior approval such as this, the LPA are purely required to assess the proposed development solely on the basis of its siting and appearance. This assessment must however also take into account any representations received. The provisions of Schedule 2 above do not require regard to be had to the development plan, but Officers must have regard to those policies in the development plan, related guidance and the NPPF only in so far as they are material considerations relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

In this instance, as well as assessing the appearance and design of the development, it is considered that matters relevant to the siting of the proposed development would comprise of ecology, highways/access and noise/impacts on residential amenity.

Appearance

Policies P1, P2, P3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy are material considerations as they relate to issues of siting, appearance and landscape. The application site sits on land within an existing cricket club which is surrounded by trees and hedges that range in height from 5-11m above ground level. There are also other tall structures in close proximity such as electricity pylons, floodlights within the neighbouring playing field and lighting to the tennis courts. There would be a separation distance of approximately 50m between the proposed mast and the closest neighbouring property at Hopwood Farm, approximately 87m to Butterworth Grange which comprise residential apartments and approximately 115m from Burns Court.

It is acknowledged that the mast would be tall at 30m in height, however the use of a lattice structure provides good visual permeability, with this design creating a structure with a more lightweight appearance especially at the levels below the antennas. The structure will also be coloured camouflage which will further reduce the overall visual impact of the development.

The lattice tower would sit as a standalone structure within the context of the cricket club which is bound by trees and hedging. The tower and associated infrastructure would be visually prominent within this context. It is acknowledged that the lattice tower will sit higher than the surrounding trees and a large section of the mast would be seen from the nearby residential properties and wider views. However, given the context of the surrounding landscape which is already characterised by tall pylons of about 50m in height and the distances between the proposed development and neighbouring properties, these factors contribute to significantly mitigating against its impact and presence.

The mast cannot be hidden but its position and design relative to sensitive receptors seeks to reduce its visual impact. The submitted supporting information with this application explains that the installation is to enhance coverage and introduce new 5G coverage to the region while providing a structure capable of being shared by all 4 main operators. The supporting information also states that its height is due to operational requirements to provide sufficient coverage to the target coverage area. 5G requires taller structures as they operate in higher frequency bands and these higher frequencies result in more signal loss and greater interference from obstacles.

It is considered that the existing trees will provide a degree of screening, particularly during the summer months but from wider views the tower will be visible. However, as mentioned previously, the area is already characterised by tall pylons and unless you are within the grounds of the cricket club, from a public eye level perspective the mast would be barely visible. It is likely that the closest residential properties would have a view of the top of the tower from first floor buildings but given the separation distances and the angle / line of sight needed to view the proposed lattice tower, it is considered that the tower could only be seen from further afield. It is not considered that the proposed lattice tower would be directly or unacceptably visible from neighbouring properties that have views across the cricket club and beyond.

The proposed compound at the foot of the tower will have a 2.4m high palisade fence around the base of the mast and further cabinets in a 10m x 10m compound. This would introduce a new urbanising feature but one that would be set against the backdrop of the tennis courts, away from the highway and residential properties.

As such and as demonstrated above, the introduction of the installation would not create any visual clutter. The mast would be set back from the surrounding roads and properties and this will minimise its visual intrusion in the street scene. In the wider area, the visual impact is lessened given it is well away from road frontages. In that sense there would be very low visual harm within the street scene. By reason of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation in the cricket club site, the proposed visual harm would be low to the character and appearance of the area.

As mentioned above, Policies P1, P2, P3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy are material considerations as they relate to issues of siting, appearance and landscape and it is considered that the proposed development is designed and located to be compliant with these policies.

Those policies amongst other things, collectively seek good design and to support the roll out of mobile technology whilst ensuring that new telecommunications development is of a high quality design which minimises the impact on visual amenity, character, and appearance of the surrounding area. The lattice tower and associated infrastructure are appropriately designed for their intended purpose and the development would not conflict with paragraph 120 of the NPPF which requires equipment to be a sympathetic design and camouflaged where appropriate.

However, notwithstanding the above design/appearance considerations, whilst the development is not considered to create visual harm as a result of its siting and appearance, other policies in the development plan and related guidance and the NPPF only in so far as they are material considerations relevant to matters of siting and appearance have been considered and these are set out below.

Trees and Ecological Considerations

Whilst Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) does not specifically require an assessment on matters of biodiversity and ecology, it does require an assessment on the siting of the proposed development and in this instance the development is located within an existing green open space bound by trees and hedging and its siting would therefore directly impact upon existing trees and biodiversity.

To that effect, PfE Policy JP-G7 seeks to deliver a net enhancement of biodiversity resources through a collective of measures which are broadly aligned with the approach to BNG outlined within the Environment Act (2021), the NPPF and supporting guidance documents. The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications and so the proposed development should achieve net gains for biodiversity via species enhancement as guided by the NPPF (paragraphs 187d and 192b) to achieve demonstrable net gain for biodiversity.

In this instance, the application is exempt from providing statutory BNG given that the development is effectively granted planning permission by a development order under Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

However, Core Strategy Policy G7 states that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection and that opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported. It is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. Core Strategy Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity. Core Strategy Policy G6 also requires any tree loss that is unavoidable should be compensated for on a 2:1 basis.

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment and a Compensation Strategy.

This supporting information confirms that the habitats on the site comprise dense Blackthorn scrub and Willow scrub which is relatively low value and is not suspected to support any notable or scarce plant species. The assessment concludes that the surrounding scrub and playing fields are well used/heavily disturbed by people and are unlikely to be impacted by the proposals provided some standard precautions are taken during construction to prevent damage to surrounding habitats, primarily through the

use of tree protective fencing. The assessment also concludes that there is a limited risk of encountering nesting birds and badger.

The submitted Compensation Strategy provides replacement planting to offset the loss of the small area of scrub for the development. The Strategy states that there is approximately 100sqm of Blackthorn and Willow scrub to be lost and an equivalent sized area is proposed to the west of the application site which would comprise a more diverse array of native scrub species which the Strategy suggests would be more beneficial to the ecology of the site.

The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the submitted information and advised that the proposed planting scheme to mitigate for the loss of the willow and blackthorn scrub is acceptable and no further surveys are required in regard to bats. Informatives are sufficient to advise on protected species and nesting birds.

In this regard it is also understood that the Order does not provide any specific authority for imposing additional conditions beyond the deemed conditions for development by electronic communications code operators contained within it. However, the deemed conditions pertinent to Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as are applicable here, specifically requires development to be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the Council is satisfied that there is statutory control and an obligation by the applicant to adhere to the deemed conditions.

Noise

Lattice towers are passive structures with no moving parts and they do not emit any audible noise. The only potential source of sound may be the operation of cooling fans during periods of high temperatures and are not audible beyond a few metres and site visits for maintenance are minimal and infrequent, generally once per year with handheld tools only. The nearest residential dwelling is located approximately 50m away and there is approximately 87m to Butterworth Grange which comprise residential apartments. The site is also surrounded by trees and hedging and close to the busy Norden Road which will mitigate against any negligible noise.

Highways and Pedestrian Safety

The Council's Highways officer has reviewed the application and raised no objection to the proposal. Planning Officers recognise that the introduction of the new telecommunications equipment would not hinder the right of passage for pedestrians or have any direct impact upon the operation of the highway network.

Health

The submission states that the installation has been designed to be fully compliant with the public exposure guidelines established by the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), with the supporting statement confirming that the installation would comply with ICNIRP legislation. As such it is not considered that there would be any health issues with the proposal.

Site Selection and Alternative Sites

The Council is aware of the economic and social benefits of providing and enhancing electronic communications infrastructure and 'levelling up' digital connectivity. The technical requirements of the mobile telecommunications equipment are clearly

explained and justified in the documents that were submitted in support of the application, this includes the need for the lattice tower to be of the height and design proposed, in the location it has been proposed and contains reference to six other sites identified by the applicant. All of these sites were discounted for reasons explained within the submitted supporting information accompanying the planning application.

The search for alternative sites in order to achieve the desired outcome of the proposal appears sufficient and the reasons for discounting such sites appear justified. All other alternative sites would also have a much more significant impact on visual harm to the area, highway safety and proximity to residential properties.

Nevertheless, from the submitted alternative site selection assessment contained within the supporting information, it would be rational to conclude that there are no other suitable sites reasonably available that would result in a lesser degree of visual harm or harm to the amenity of nearby occupiers than the site presented here.

Out of all the sites reviewed, the proposed application site acts as the most appropriate site to deliver the necessary infrastructure save for the development being acceptable in all necessary aspects.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

The proposal would undoubtedly introduce significant benefits in providing 5G coverage in the area where there is a need for coverage and capacity, as supported by paragraph 119 of the Framework.

Owing to the benefit of the above site assessment, it is considered that the siting and appearance of the proposed development is acceptable and the recommendation is such that prior approved is required and granted.

RECOMMENDATION

Prior Approval Required and Granted.

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following:

Drawing No: 100 Rev A – Site Location Maps

Drawing No: 201 Rev C – Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: 202 Rev C – Proposed Planting Scheme Plan

Drawing No: 301 Rev C – Proposed Site Elevation

Compensation Strategy by Brooks Ecological, Ref: EN-8750-01, Date: 04/09/2025

Received 15th September 2025

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and in compliance with Policies P1, P2, P3, G7 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G9 of PfE and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The replacement planting scheme shall be carried out in complete accordance with the details provided in the Compensation Strategy by Brooks Ecological, Ref: EN-8750-01, Date: 04/09/2025 and Drawing No: 202 Rev C – Proposed Planting Scheme Plan, received by the Local Planning Authority on 15th September 2025.

Reason: To mitigate for the loss of the willow and blackthorn scrub in line with Policy G7 of the Core Strategy, JP-G7 of PfE and the NPPF.

Informatives

1. The applicant is advised that protected species can turn up in unexpected places and the granting of this prior approval does not negate the need to abide by the laws which are in place to safeguard biodiversity. The applicant must seek ecological advice should they find or suspect that the proposals will impact on protected species.
2. The applicant is advised that work that will impact on habitats where nesting birds may be present (for example demolition of a building or works to trees and other vegetation including undergrowth like bramble), should not be undertaken in the main bird nesting season (March – August) unless suitable checks for active bird nests have been undertaken.